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Thomas Wistar
from his friend John Murray
Eddy
MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

JOHN MURRAY, Jun.

READ BEFORE THE GOVERNORS OF THE

NEW-YORK HOSPITAL,

NINTH MONTH, FOURTEENTH, 1819,

BY THOMAS EDDY.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNORS.

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Eddy

MEMOIR, &c.

THE character of a private individual, who has been remarkable through life for exalted piety, and acts of purest benevolence, is a pleasing subject to contemplate; and the conduct of the man who has zealously laboured to benefit his fellow creatures, and to increase the general stock of human happiness, must ever form a useful lesson to mankind. It marks the good way for others to follow,—the example becomes an incentive to virtuous action, and may also be the means of encouraging many among the rising generation, to employ their time and talents in such a manner, as most likely to be acceptable to God, and useful to mankind.

These considerations appear to warrant the author of this memoir, in offering to the Governors of the New-York Hospital, some account of the exemplary life of our late most excellent and valuable friend and associate, JOHN MURRAY, jun. who is now translated into that “better world,” where our praises, or our opinions, cannot in any degree affect him.—But to us, who knew and loved him, and to his fellow citizens at large, the recollection of his amiable character, the review of his well-spent life, and the testimonies we can truly bear to his many virtues, must prove both interesting and consolatory. And it may be hoped, that the loss we have sustained, may impress our minds with a due consideration of the truth, that Divine Providence has apportioned to every one some peculiar duties to perform, in order to prepare

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us, when every part of the great business of life is over, for an admittance “into that city, whose walls are salvation, and its gates praise.”

JOHN MURRAY, Jun. was born in this city, on the 3d of the 8th month, in the year 1758. He was the son of Robert Murray, the principal of the highly respectable commercial house of Murray, Sansom & Co. of London and New-York; and brother to Lindley Murray, of the city of York, in England, whose literary character is well known in Europe and America.

When about twelve years of age, he was a scholar with myself at Friends’ Grammar School, in Philadelphia; the remainder of his education he received in England.

In his youthful days he was remarked as being of an uncommonly active and lively disposition.

Early in life he commenced business in this city with Moses Rogers, was very successful in his commercial pursuits, and, after a few years, withdrew himself from this concern.

His mind for sometime had received deep religious impressions, and under the power of the mild and humanizing principles of the Gospel, his natural feelings were controlled, and, in a good degree, subjected to the benign influence of divine grace. From this time he became zealously engaged to promote every measure, that would conduce to ameliorate the condition of mankind, without distinction of sect or colour. But, that he might be rightly qualified, under the guidance of the divine spirit of his Lord and Master, he considered, that a sense of religious duty should precede his actions for promoting benevolent purposes, and thus secure the divine blessing on all his undertakings.

About this period his father proposed to him, to admit him as a partner in the house of Murray, Sansom & Co., which flattering offer he declined, from a sense of religious obligation.

Having acquired, as he conceived, a competent share of this world's goods, he apprehended it to be his duty, as a faithful steward, to show his gratitude to his Creator, in giving up a due portion of his time and substance, towards assisting the poor and indigent, by encouraging them in habits of industry, and in promoting the means of bestowing upon their children the benefits of education. In order to accomplish this purpose, he gradually relinquished all mercantile pursuits.

How rare it is to meet with a person, in the course of a prosperous business, to stop short, and say:—I have enough—hereafter I will consider, what Providence has put into my hands, as a trust for the good of my fellow-creatures!

It would extend this memoir to an improper length, to attempt exhibiting his various pursuits in advancing the great cause of universal philanthropy, which, at different periods of his life, engaged his attention. I will therefore confine myself to some prominent features, that may serve to illustrate the general character of our late excellent and valuable friend.

The first public engagement of benevolence in which he embarked, was, as a Governor of this Hospital, to which he was first elected in 1782, and successively afterwards to the present year, a period of 37 years. During this time, he rendered this institution many essential and important services, by his uniformly kind and affectionate attention to the sick, and in advancing the general interests of the Hospital. He was remarked for his punctual and regular attendance, (when his health permitted,) of the monthly and special meetings of this Board.

In the year 1785, he was sedulously engaged in the formation of the “ Society for promoting the manumission of Slaves, and for protecting such of them as have been or may be liberated.” At this period, the minds of most of our citizens

were not enlightened on the great subject of African Emancipation, and their deep rooted prejudices were so violent, that the friends of humanity, in asserting the rights of the people of colour, had to encounter innumerable and serious difficulties; an enmity, accompanied with a bitter spirit, was excited in the minds of those, whose selfish interest induced them to consider the acts of the Society as an interference in their personal rights—the members therefore were constantly exposed to personal insult. But, knowing the integrity of their motives, and convinced of the justice of the cause, no difficulties could deter JOHN MURRAY from contributing largely, in a pecuniary way, and uniformly, and zealously, by personal exertions, in support of a cause, that he conceived, was sanctioned by the principles and genuine spirit of Christianity. From the first formation of the Society, a great portion of his time was devoted, not merely to obtain the liberty of those who were by law entitled to their freedom, but to ameliorate their condition, by promoting their religious and moral improvement, and to afford to them the blessing of education. With these views he proposed to the Society the establishing of a school, exclusively for the education of coloured children, in the superintendence of which, much of his time was bestowed; for, although it was under the care of a board of trustees, yet for many years he was particularly occupied in advancing its interests as a trustee, and as treasurer, in which latter capacity he served the Society from its first establishment in 1785, to the termination of his life.

The distressed situation of the aboriginal inhabitants of this country, excited much of his attention and sympathy. About the year 1795, he was instrumental, with several of his friends, in endeavouring to improve and ameliorate the condition of the Indians, residing within the limits

of this State, by instructing them in agriculture and the useful arts, and in having their children taught the common branches of school learning, and thus to prepare their minds for the reception of a knowledge of the Christian religion. He performed several interesting visits to the tribes of Brothertown, Stockbridge, Oneida and Onandago, and had to encounter in the course of these journeys, considerable hardships and inconvenience, at a time when the roads were extremely bad, and the accommodations for travelling very indifferent. Directed by an ardent zeal for promoting the best interests of humanity, he spared no effort, to aid the religious and moral improvement of this afflicted and neglected portion of the human family.

The penal laws of this State, prior to 1796, were extremely imperfect, inflicting penalties very disproportionate to offences. In many instances the punishment of death was deemed indispensably necessary, to expiate certain crimes. Believing that these laws were in many instances alike opposed to humanity, to justice and to policy, as well as to the mild spirit of the religion we profess, our worthy colleague united with some others of his friends, in an application to the leading members of our Legislature, in proposing an entire repeal of the then existing penal code, for the purpose of introducing the present penitentiary system. In consequence of this application, and principally owing to the friendly aid and exertions of Gen. Schuyler, and the present Chief Justice Spencer, then distinguished members of the Senate, a bill was introduced by the latter gentleman, and passed into a law, by which the former penal laws were repealed, a more mild code established, and a state prison directed to be built in the vicinity of this city. To carry this law into effect, our deceased friend was appointed one of the commissioners, and he also voluntarily accepted the appoint-

ment of one of the Inspectors of the prison. The first Board of Inspectors had an arduous task to perform, in organizing a plan for establishing cleanliness, order and regularity amongst the convicts, and devising for them various modes of employment. During this period the affairs of the prison were greatly benefitted by the zeal of JOHN MURRAY, and the Board derived considerable aid from his mild and conciliatory demeanour, which very much contributed to soften the minds of the prisoners, and to improve their moral habits.

There is perhaps no benevolent institution in the city, that has been more productive of real usefulness, than the New-York Free School Society.—It has now under its care four schools, that educate near 2000 poor children. Of this Society, it may almost be said, JOHN MURRAY was the founder. On its first establishment he was elected Vice President, and continued as one of its most active trustees, as long as his health permitted. . . .

In the year 1811, he was appointed by Governor Tompkins, one of the Commissioners to report to the Legislature, a plan for the “better organization of common schools throughout the State of New-York,” intended to be supported by a fund, denominated “the common school fund,” which is yearly increasing, and now yields about 80,000 dollars annually. The report of the commissioners was adopted, and a law passed, 1812, appointing a person as superintendant of common schools, and otherwise perfecting a system, which is likely to produce incalculable benefits to the present and future generations.

But in his career of usefulness he, was not confined to such institutions as may strictly be denominated *benevolent*—he felt an interest in whatever had a tendency to exalt the character of his native state. His name is recog-

nized among the first members of the New-York Historical Society, and on its formation, he made a handsome donation to its funds.

The yearly increase of paupers in our city, notwithstanding the great assistance afforded them by the numerous public and private institutions, induced JOHN MURRAY to unite with several of our citizens, to establish “the Society for the prevention of Pauperism.” Among many important public advantages produced by the efforts of this Society, is the “New-York Savings Bank,” incorporated by a law passed on an application from the Board of Managers. Perhaps no similar occasion served more to call forth the anxiety and energies of our deceased friend, than the success of this undertaking. In the act of incorporation, JOHN MURRAY was named as the first Vice President, and the Directors also appointed him treasurer—a name that peculiarly served to render the institution popular amongst all ranks of our fellow citizens. He was prevented by his last sickness from rendering it any personal services, but the last enquiry, which it is believed he made, after any of the numerous public charities with which he was concerned, was “how does the Savings Bank get on?”—on being told of its unexampled success, he was too weak to say more, than that “it afforded him great satisfaction.” Soon after his decease, the following entry was made in the minutes, and published by order of the Directors of the Savings Bank:—

“At a meeting of the Board held in the Bank this day, Duncan P. Campbell, was unanimously elected to fill the office of Treasurer, vacated by the lamented death of John Murray, Jun. Esq.

“The Board, take this opportunity of expressing their deep regret, at the loss sustained by this institution, in the death of so distinguished a philanthropist as Mr. MURRAY.

“ In doing it, they but join in the general sympathy of all
 “ who have witnessed his long and active course, in every
 “ thing which could meliorate the condition of suffering hu-
 “ manity, or promote moral improvement among every
 “ class of his fellow-men. He now rests from his labor, and
 “ his works follow him.”

By order of the Directors,

JAMES EASTBURN, Secretary.

Bank for Savings, 11th August, 1819.

“ The Society for promoting Industry,” established in this city in 1814, under the management of a number of our most respectable and pious females, has been productive of incalculable benefit; but for want of adequate funds, to carry into effect the views and wishes of the managers, they were often embarrassed and discouraged. At these periods JOHN MURRAY came forward, and by advancing money, and using his influence to prevail on others to make similar advances, the Society was enabled to continue its extensive usefulness. The following extracts from the minutes of the managers, will serve to show how highly they esteemed the character of their late friend.

“ While many able pens are engaged in deploring the
 “ loss, and commemorating the worth, of the late friend of
 “ suffering humanity, JOHN MURRAY, jun. ‘ the Society for
 “ the promotion of Industry,’ would raise their voice, how-
 “ ever feebly, in the general regret; and gratify their feel-
 “ ings, by enumerating a few of the benefits they received
 “ from their late friend, who might justly be styled their
 “ best friend.

“ The Society was instituted in 1814, and at its com-
 “ mencement was honoured with his countenance, by ex-
 “ pressed approbation, and a liberal donation to its funds,

“ which was afterwards increased to double the amount.” The minutes then detail the aid received from him, by his personal influence with the City Corporation, in order to obtain from them pecuniary assistance, and also of his addressing a meeting of citizens, called for the purpose of supporting and extending the plan proposed to be pursued by the Society. In the commencement of the present year, being informed that the Society were again without funds, and had no other prospect but closing the House of Industry, JOHN MURRAY addressed them by letter, in which he expressed his anxiety for the advancement of “ the good work they were engaged in,” and offered to advance them \$100, to be taken out in work, and to loan them \$500 for one year, without interest. This, with other assistance, enabled them further to prosecute the design of the establishment. The minutes then close in the following words—

“ When the last enemy to be encountered, gained the victory over JOHN MURRAY, jun. it is much to be feared that this institution received a mortal blow. The managers would still continue to raise their prayers, to that God who seeth not as man seeth ; and while the kindnesses of their deceased friend, can never be effaced from their memories, they would humbly pray, that others may be induced to follow his example, and go and do likewise. Then may this institution still be a blessing to the public.”

It would be unnecessary to detail more of the many public concerns, that engaged the attention of our late worthy colleague. During the last thirty years of his life, his time was mostly devoted to the service of the religious Society of Friends (of which he was a member, and for many years a distinguished Elder) and to the various objects of public and private benevolence. The income of his estate was considerable, and he more than once mentioned to me, that he

did not wish to reserve more than sufficient for his common expenses; the overplus was spent in promoting the benefit of his fellow creatures. His humility and self-denial, were manifest in his plain manner of living, scrupulously avoiding any kind of extravagance, lest he might expend, in useless objects, what he conceived ought to be reserved for the use of the poor and needy. In his manners he was courteous, kind, and charitable; evincing a readiness on all occasions, to devote his time and talents to the best of all causes, the good of mankind. His private charity was great, and generally unknown to his most intimate friends. He was a member of a greater part of the charitable societies in this city; each of whom, received from him a yearly anonymous letter, enclosing from 50 to 100 dollars. His delight seemed to be, to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, and to visit the sick and distressed; or, to adopt the language of an eloquent writer, “to survey the mansions
“of sorrow and pain; to take the gage and dimensions of
“misery, depression and contempt; to remember the for-
“gotten; to attend to the neglected, and to visit the for-
“saken.”

In 1812, whilst attending, at Albany, a meeting of the Commissioners appointed to consider the subject of improving the state of Common Schools, he left his lodging one evening, to have an interview with a Committee of the Legislature, to whom was referred a communication made by the Governor, proposing to substitute some mode of punishment for that of death. The streets of Albany were at this time covered with ice, which rendered walking extremely hazardous; our lamented friend had not proceeded far on his humane errand, when he fell, and was so seriously injured, that notwithstanding the care and solicitude of his friends, he was confined to his room some weeks, and never

recovered from the injury he thus sustained. This accident subjected him to almost constant, and frequently exerceiating pains ; and, without doubt, hastened his death. But he endured all his sufferings with christian patience, and submission to the divine will ; and when in company with his friends, generally exhibited a disposition remarkably cheerful. About the commencement of the present year, he became more seriously indisposed, and on the morning of the fourth of last month, he died, whilst in the act of supplication to that Lord whom he so faithfully served. His body was interred in Friends burying-ground, after a solemn meeting in their meeting-house, attended by a considerable number of his friends, who, it is believed, will long remember the solemnity of the occasion.

The religious character of JOHN MURRAY, jun. was highly estimated by his fellow members of the Society of Friends, and also by those of other religious denominations, to whom he was personally known. He was by no means contracted in his opinions, but of a disposition liberal and enlarged. He often expressed his sincere desire, that Christians might more and more avoid unnecessary disputes about non-essentials, and unite in promoting the common cause, in which they all profess to be engaged ; that, for his own part, he knew of no distinction of sect or party ; but that the one true church is composed of individuals of all religious denominations ; who, possessed of the spirit of Divine Love, are faithfully endeavouring to know and to perform the divine will concerning them. These, he would often say, are united in one head, even Christ, and in the fellowship of his gospel ; they feel that they are all brethren. In his intercourse with mankind, he seemed to have adopted for his motto, that saying of Luther, “ In quo aliquid Christi rideo “ illum diligo.” “ In whomsoever I see any thing of Christ,

“ him I love.” Possessed of these sentiments, it afforded him the most heart-felt satisfaction, to meet with a considerable number of highly respectable and pious men, of various religious denominations, who convened in this city, from almost every state in the union, for the purpose of forming a National Bible Society. He was a member of the convention, and frequently expressed his having enjoyed great satisfaction in witnessing its proceedings, conducted as they were, in remarkable condescension and harmony, and in the spirit of gospel love. He was appointed a member of the first board of managers, and twice contributed to the general funds of the Society. He often remarked, that one of the most evident designs of divine Providence, in establishing this highly important Society, was, to bring together those of all denominations, by which means sectarian jealousies may be removed, and peace and love established between christians. These considerations, so congenial with the mind of JOHN MURRAY, and his solicitude to witness the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures, amongst the poor and neglected, in every part of this widely extended continent, induced him, during the remainder of his life, to continue to be an ardent and active member of the American Bible Society. His sentiments of the importance and usefulness of that Society, were fully evinced, in a speech he made, at its anniversary meeting, in the fifth month, 1818; an extract from which, as it serves further to illustrate his general character, will, I presume, be considered as an acceptable and appropriate termination of the present very brief sketch of the life and labours of our deceased friend :

“ In rising to speak on the present interesting occasion, I feel my mind solemnized,—and it is with diffidence I attempt to offer a sentiment before this very respectable assembly. In making the motion which I have done, I have

two considerations in view ; the one is, to approve of the proceedings of the Board of Managers, the other to avail myself of the opportunity of communicating a few sentiments, in relation to the highly important nature of this Society, formed for the express purpose of promoting a general diffusion of the Holy Scriptures—a work of stupendous magnitude, contemplating incalculable good to the human family ; more especially when we connect with it a practical observance of those moral and religious duties which they enjoin, and with which the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are replete. Hence it is, in a peculiar manner, obligatory on the members of a society, so noble and dignified as this, to be careful and solicitous to square their lives and conduct, by the precepts contained in the book they are so assiduous and zealous to circulate ; as it must be granted,—“ that example speaks a louder language than precept.” I rejoice in the hope, that the efforts of Bible Societies, and other associations and means for enlightening the human understanding, and improving the heart, will be blest in an eminent degree, not only in our own country, but in regions far more remote. I also indulge the consoling hope, that they will tend to dispel prejudice and bigotry, and to batter down that wall of partition which ignorance and illiberality of sentiment, has raised up between the different religious denominations. I am glad in believing that I am no bigot, and that I can with great sincerity adopt the language of the apostle Peter, whose mind, like many others, had been biassed and warped by the prejudices of education, and the force of tradition ; but, when his understanding became enlightened by the rays of Divine Light, he could then bear testimony to the universality of the love of God, uttering the following memorable expressions, “ Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter

of persons, but that, in every nation, they that fear him, and work righteousness, will be accepted of him." There is no doctrine more clearly and fully inculcated in the New Testament than that of charity, or in other words "Divine Love." "God is Love, and they that dwell in him, dwell in Love:" and by this, said our blessed Saviour, shall all men know "ye are my disciples, if ye love one another."

"The Apostle Paul, in the 13th, Chap. of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, describes the excellency of this virtue in a peculiar and striking point of view. His illustrations go to prove that it is the prominent feature in the Christian character. Let us therefore, my friends, cultivate this heavenly principle; let us, by the tenor of our lives and conduct, evince that we are the disciples and followers of Jesus Christ. I am thankful at feeling my heart glow with love to all my fellow-creatures, and that I meet with those of every Christian denomination, to whom I can give the right hand of fellowship."

"When I reflect, my friends, on the solemnity of the occasion, which has drawn together so large and respectable an assemblage of our fellow-creatures, all of whom, I trust, are arraigned as candidates for an immortal and glorious inheritance, I hope we may feel renewedly animated, in a cause which is calculated to promote the present and the future happiness of mankind."

"I do not wish to trespass either on the time or patience of this assembly; but, I do not know that I can close my communication with sentiments more appropriate, or with language better adapted, than was used by my late friend HENRY TUKE,* at a meeting of the Bible Society of York, in England, of which he was a distinguished member."

* An eminent Minister of the Society of Friends.

“ I feel,” said he, “ disposed to express the gratification which I experience, on seeing so large and respectable a meeting of my fellow-citizens, on the present occasion, and particularly with the union of Christians of various denominations, in the support of this great cause. May we not compare the various sects of Christianity to the different tribes of ancient Israel ? We, like them, may have some different views, and separate interests ; but, we acknowledge one God, and one Lord, even our Lord Jesus Christ. We profess to be governed by the same laws, which are contained in the Holy Scriptures, and though we may not unite in the construction of some of these laws, yet, when we consider in how large a proportion of them the professors of Christianity are agreed, and consequently how small is the part in which we differ, there is much cause for us to feel as brethren, and to unite, as has frequently been the case, in defence of our common faith ; and I can truly say, it affords me no small pleasure to believe, that if it should ever be my happy lot to gain an admittance into that city whose walls are salvation, and its gates praise, I shall there, as well as here, have many fellow-citizens, and I trust, no small portion of those who now hear my voice ; who, though I may differ from them on some points of Christian doctrine, or rather, perhaps, of Christian practice, I feel no difficulty in believing, will finally be added to that innumerable multitude, which the divinely eagle-eyed apostle, saw standing before the throne, clothed in white robes, and having palms in their hands ; but, who, though possessed of these emblems of righteousness and of victory, were far from claiming any merit to themselves, but ascribe their salvation wholly to the Lord God, and the Lamb.”

APPENDIX.

*The following Communications are taken from the
Daily Advertiser of the 2d and 4th of October,
1819.*

TO the numerous friends of the late JOHN MURRAY, jun. and to the humane in general, the information will probably be very gratifying, that by his Last Will and Testament, filed in the Probate's office, it appears, that his charities did not end with his useful life. To a number of worthy individuals he has bequeathed from fifty to two hundred and fifty dollars each. To the Manumission Society, five hundred dollars. To the Female Association for the Education of Poor Children, &c. five hundred dollars. To the Society for the support of Poor Widows, two hundred dollars. To the Orphan Society, two hundred dollars. To the Humane Society, two hundred dollars. To the Dispensary, two hundred dollars. To the New-York Hospital, to purchase books for the use of the patients, one hundred dollars. The *income* arising on lands, valued from eight to ten thousand dollars, are set apart for the education and cloathing of children of "Friends"

in low circumstances. The amount of four thousand dollars, vested in stock, is left to trustees, who are annually to apply the *interest* for the use of poor persons *not* members of the Society of Friends. To two worthy females, one hundred dollars, to be distributed, at their discretion, among the needy.

IT having pleased Almighty God, in his infinitely wise and righteous providence, to remove by death, on the 4th of the last month, *John Murray, jun.* Vice-President of this Society, it was resolved to make the following brief memoir respecting him :

That we highly appreciate that uniform line of Christian and philanthropic conduct, which has pre-eminently distinguished his useful life.

He was one of the first who originated the plan of this institution, and he has faithfully laboured to promote its interest—being Vice-President from the time of its establishment, until the day of his death.

The institution is much indebted to him for direct pecuniary aid, and much likewise for what it has derived from his influence.

Although from his great devotion to the cause of philanthropy, his avocations were numerous, he was nevertheless punctual in his attendance at this Board, and greatly desirous that we should bestow liberally and

economically—doing the greatest possible good, with the means in our power—invariably enforcing by his example, the principles he wished to inculcate upon his associates.

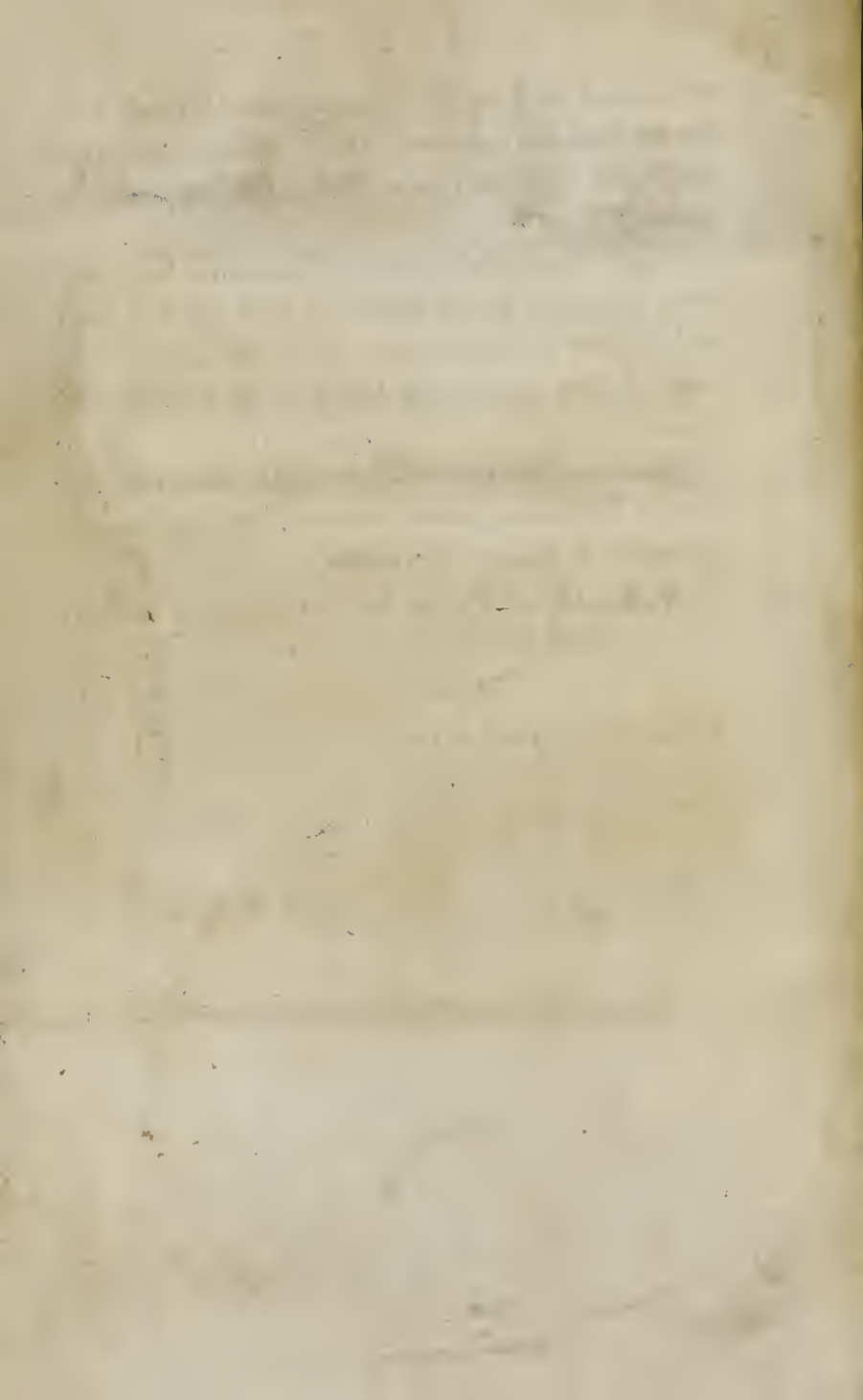
Being a practical christian, he devoted the last thirty years of his life, to the service of God, and the good of his fellow men; and has at length, we trust, retired to everlasting rest, in the bosom of his gracious Redeemer.

Sensible of the loss sustained by his death, we will cherish his memory with deep sensibility, and humbly endeavour to emulate his virtues.

Published by order of the Board of Trustees of the NEW-YORK FREE-SCHOOL SOCIETY,

GEORGE TRIMBLE, Sec'y Pro Tem.

9th Month, (Sept.) 24th, 1819.



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